

Rep. Peter Welch on Wednesday voted to overhaul the Defense Department's purchasing procedures to reduce waste and save money.

By a vote of 417 to 3, the House passed the IMPROVE Acquisition Act (H.R. 5013), which requires the Defense Department to create a performance management system and establishes financial incentives and penalties to ensure that contracts are being fulfilled on time and on budget.

"Our nation spends far too much on costly defense systems, and too much of that is wasted on poor-performing contracts. With so many challenges facing our nation – from a struggling economy to skyrocketing deficits – the very least we can do is rid the defense acquisition process of waste and inefficiencies," Welch said.

The vote on H.R. 5013 follows a 2009 Government Accountability Office study showing that the cost of major weapons programs exceeded initial estimates by nearly \$300 billion. The report showed that most weapons programs are initiated with inadequate technical knowledge, resulting in unrealistically low estimates of the time and money required for completion. As technical requirements are changed, the cost increases, the quantity of weapons purchased is reduced and the fielding of such weapons is delayed.

The IMPROVE Acquisition Act directs the Secretary of Defense to ensure that all elements of the defense acquisition system are subject to regular performance assessments to maximize value. It also directs the Secretary to improve workforce training and employee incentives to encourage the achievement of acquisition goals. And it requires contractors to disclose seriously delinquent federal tax debts.